

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-16 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8, 10, 12-14 and 16 are amended. No new matter has been added.

The indication that claims 4, 8, 12 and 16 recite allowable subject matter is gratefully acknowledged.

For the following reasons, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

I. REPLY TO REJECTIONS

A. 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

On page 2, item 1 of the Office Action, claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph for allegedly being indefinite. Claims 1, 2 and 5 are amended to obviate the rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

B. 35 U.S.C. § 103

On page 2, item 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-11, and 13-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,261,008 to Yamamoto (hereinafter "Yamamoto"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,054,090 to Knight et al. (hereinafter "Knight"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Yamamoto discloses a method for verifying a fingerprint of a designated person by comparing a sample data generated from a sample image of the fingerprint with a master data generated from a master image of the designated person's fingerprint. The master and sample

images are divided into a plurality of blocks and each of the plurality of blocks is further divided into a plurality of block areas (abstract of Yamamoto). In Fig. 1 and col. 6, lines 29-48 of Yamamoto, it is disclosed that a fingerprint image 41 is divided into a plurality of blocks A-O, each of which is further divided into 16 sub-blocks a to p. The comparison between the sample image and the master image is performed using the data with respect to the portion of blocks above the center of characteristics (blocks from A-I) out of blocks from A-O. The Office Action asserts that claims 1, 5, 9 and 13 read on this disclosure. The Applicant respectfully disagrees.

As shown in Yamamoto, the fingerprint image 41 is first divided into 15 blocks designated A-O, then each of the 15 blocks A-O are themselves further subdivided into 16 blocks a-p. Therefore, all of blocks A-O are subdivided into a-p and each of the subdivided blocks a-p include 16 x 16 pixels. In other words, all of the blocks A-O are subdivided.

This is in stark contrast to the claimed invention, for example claim 1, where the controller is configured to execute a process for dividing the fingerprint image into a plurality of unit blocks with a predetermined size and then execute a process of dividing the fingerprint image into a center region and a peripheral region and further subdividing the unit blocks of the center region into subdivided blocks.

That is, the claims call for grouping the plurality of blocks into a center region and a peripheral region, and further subdividing the blocks of the center region. Those blocks in the peripheral region are not subdivided. In contrast, Yamamoto discloses subdividing all of the

unit blocks first then randomly choosing a group of blocks A-I for comparison. Knight fails to disclose this feature recited in the claims, and therefore, Knight does not overcome the deficiencies in Yamamoto.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 5, 9 and 13 are patentable over the applied references. Claims 2 and 3, which depend from claim 1, claims 6 and 7, which depend from claim 5, claims 10 and 11, which depend from claim 9, and claims 14 and 15, which depend from claim 13, are likewise patentable over the applied references and their combination for at least the reasons discussed above and for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

II. CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney, Seth S. Kim, at the telephone number listed below.

Serial No. 10/073,927
Reply to Office Action of December 27, 2004

Docket No. MRE-0055

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
FLESHNER & KIM, LLP



John C. Eisenhart
Registration No. 38,128
Seth S. Kim
Registration No. 54,577

P.O. Box 221200
Chantilly, Virginia 20153-1200
(703) 766-3701 DYK/JCE/SSK:knv
Date: MARCH 21, 2005

Please direct all correspondence to Customer Number 34610

\\fk4\Documents\2021\2021-044\53685.doc